Race, Education, and Society in the Urban South

HIST 421 • Fall 2018

Instructor

Alexander X. Byrd
E-mail: <axb@rice.edu>
Office: Humanities 323
Office Phone: (713) 348-254
Physical Office Hours: Th 1:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. and by appointment.
Office Hours via Remind: M-S, 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Meetings

Except for university holidays and other occasions either noted on the syllabus or announced in class, the course meets Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:50 p.m.

Course Description & Objectives

This seminar focuses on issues relating to race, education, and society in the urban south, particularly since the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown* v. *Board*. The class is organized around six broad themes focusing on questions and issues related to 1) African American education before the *Brown* ruling, 2) the *Brown* cases themselves, 3) exigencies of postwar American urban life and their consequences for public school education, 4) the process and impact of court-ordered school desegregation, and 5) the regimes characterizing society and school reform in the urbanized American south since the demise of *Brown*-style, court-enforced desegregation.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to 1) demonstrate a firm understanding of the origins of African American public school education in the post civil war United States and the concomitant origins of school desegregation, 2) relate and critique what black and white contemporaries saw as the desirable aspects of segregation, and present as well the social origins of rising twentieth-century discontent with the same, 3) rehearse the road to *Brown* and speak to its most important waypoints, 4) apprehend how the changing nature of the post war American city structured the possibilities of desegregation, and 5) critique the traditions of public schooling and school reform that have come to the fore since the demise of integration as a civic ideal.

As a history seminar, the course is also explicitly concerned with helping participants to exercise key practices of the historical profession, especially those related to argumentation and research. Consequently throughout the semester we will use our subject matter as a base for critiquing, exploring, and mastering selected conventions, assumptions, and/or traditions of the profession. Seminar participants will do ample work with primary source material, vigorously practice their writing skills, and contribute to the creation of a civil but relentlessly probing community of discussion and inquiry.

Assessment & Assignments

Final course grades will be determined as follows: 40% depends on timely completion of and performance on a series of short papers; 20% depends on overall contribution to seminar

discussion and performance on two in-class preparations; 40% depends on timely completion of and performance on a seminar research project.

Members of the seminar will write five short papers of 1,500–2,000 words relating to the week's reading. The entire seminar is required to submit papers on Aug. 28 and Sept. 4. Subsequently, you may choose the additional meeting dates on which you will turn in a short paper. These essays should briefly summarize the scope and content of the week's reading, while attending in greater detail to a point in the assignment about which you are especially concerned.

The following policy applies to the short essays to some other written work in the seminar: Work submitted up to two days late will be accepted, but will be graded without comment. Work submitted more than two days late will be accepted, but with the additional penalty of being given a failing grade of 50%

The late policy described above does not apply to any extra credit work, nor does it apply to class presentations, nor does it apply to the final project. Extra credit work submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. The final project must also be submitted by the deadline.

Students may submit up to two review essays beyond the five required (and may choose to have the grade on any of these additional essays replace the grade earned on an already submitted required paper).

Members of the seminar are required to lead at least one discussion over the course of the semester. This obligation consists of preparing an oral presentation during which the presenter will frame the day's discussion by 1) laying out the themes explicit in the week's reading, and by 2) enumerating the problems for discussion emergent in the author's treatment of those themes. Initially, the discussant will direct her questions and comments to the member of the seminar appointed to serve as the day's respondent. Initially, the respondent will have first go at each question raised by the discussant before yielding to the seminar as a whole (The respondent's responsibility is to address the questions raised by the discussant and to address them in such a way as to help facilitate the subsequent conversation). Over the course of the semester, each member of the seminar will serve as a discussant and as a respondent.

The seminar project consists of creating a documentary research project of twenty pages explicating and analyzing how an issue or major question pertinent to the seminar has played out from the perspective of an educator or educational institution in the Houston area. Further details on the scope and requirements of the research project are forthcoming (and will be posted on Canvas).

One last word on assignments: Students who do not complete and submit all of the course assignments will receive a failing grade in the course.

Rusk Settlement House and School. Houston, Texas. Early twentieth century. Is there a problem being solved here? Are there problems being promulgated too?

Books & Readings

The following books form the course's core reading:

Breeden, Edwin C. "Educational Politics and the Making of School Desegregation Policy in Houston, Texas." Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 2017.

García, David G. *Strategies of Segregation: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality (American Crossroads)*. University of California Press, 2018.

Carr, Sarah. *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children*. Bloomsbury Press, 2014.

Connolly, N. D. B. *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida*. University Of Chicago Press, 2016.

Cottrol, Robert J., Raymond T. Diamond, and Leland B. Ware. *Brown V. Board of Education: Caste, Culture, and the Constitution*. University Press of Kansas, 2003.

Erickson, Ansley T. *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*. University Of Chicago Press, 2016.

Fairclough, Adam. *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South*. Belknap Press, 2007.

Khan, Shamus. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School (the William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education)*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

Payne, Charles M. *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools*. Harvard Education Press, 2008.

Ponton, David, III. "Criminalizing Space: Ideological and Institutional Productions of Race, Gender, and State-Sanctioned Violence in Houston, 1948-1967." Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 2017.

Straus, Emily E. *Death of a Suburban Dream: Race and Schools in Compton, California (Politics and Culture in Modern America)*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Rooks, Noliwe. *Cutting School: Privatization, Segregation, and the End of Public Education*. The New Press, 2017.

Attendance & Communication

As this is a history course built largely around close reading and intense discussion, your perfect attendance is critically important to all of us in our striving to meet the stated course objectives and to each of us meeting our own personal objectives for the course. If you are not here, you cannot easily receive and process the insights of your colleagues, nor can you contribute to the building of the kind of intellectual community—through discussion, questioning, and debate—that is vital to the work of a history seminar. The following attendance policy is in place for this course: Students enrolled in the course may miss up to one class with no penalty and with no questions asked. Students who miss additional days of class will be penalized 1/3 of a grade point on their final grade for each additional day missed.

Assignment details and returned work will be uploaded to Canvas. So it is important for you to check that site frequently. Brief communications concerning the course (reminders, change of venue, et cetera) will be sent via Remind (which you can set to receive class messages via your preferred email address, via text message, or through the mobile Remind app). You can find the Remind instructions by following this link.

Additional Critical Information

Disability Resource Center

Students with a documented disability and in need of academic or other adjustments should speak with me during the first two weeks of class (all communication will remain confidential). Students with disabilities should also contact the Disability Resource Center in Allen Center room 111 (phone 737-5841, e-mail adarice@rice.edu).

Rice University Honor Code

I expect that members of the course will re-familiarize themselves with the responsibilities and privileges of the university's honor system. I expect that members of the course will assiduously follow the dictates of the honor system. I expect that members of the course will raise with me any questions concerning how the system applies to their work in the class. The pledge is required on all written work submitted in the course.

Wellness

Take care of yourself. As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down,

difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Mental health services are available on campus, and treatment does work: <https://wellbeing.rice.edu/counseling-center/contact-us>.

Calendar

Aug. 21	**Course Introduction: Our Problem**
Aug. 28 NB: I am actually out of town on this day. So we will decide on another evening to meet during the same week. I hope that we decide brunch!	**A Way Forward?** Carr, *Hope Against Hope* (2014) Discussant: Dr. Byrd | Respondent: The Class
Sept. 4	Khan, *Privilege* (2012)
Sept. 11	**A Backward Glance** Fairclough, *A Class of their Own*, prologue–ch. 7. Discussant: | Respondent:
Sept. 18	**Brown Itself** Cottrol, et. al., *Brown v. Board* (2003) Discussant: | Respondent: Fairclough, *A Class of their Own*, chs. 7–10 Discussant: | Respondent:
Sept. 25	**Urban Contexts: Race and Society in Two Postwar Cities** Connolly, *A World More Concrete* (2014) Discussant: | Respondent:
Oct. 2	Straus, *Death of a Suburban Dream* (2014) Discussant: | Respondent: *200 Words (due on Canvas) and Five Minutes on Project Prospects*
Oct. 16	***Brown* Era Houston and Brown in Houston** Ponton, "Criminalizing Space" (2017) Discussant: | Respondent:
Oct. 23	Breeden, "Educational Politics" (2017) Discussant: | Respondent:
Oct. 30	**Beyond Brown** Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation* (2018) Discussant: | Respondent: Project First Paragraph Due In Class and on Canvas
Nov. 6	Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis* (2016) Discussant: | Respondent:
Nov. 13	Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change* (2008) Discussant: | Respondent:

Nov. 20	Rooks, *Cutting School* (2018) Discussant: | Respondent:
Nov. 27	Workshopping Projects
Nov. 30	*Seminar Project due at 5:00 pm Dec. 1 via Canvas*

The course syllabus is subject to change with reasonable advance notice. Revisions, if any, will be announced to the class and posted to Canvas.

Staff at the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens. Washington, DC. February 2018. A school where black lives mattered? What would that school look like?

Race, Education, and Society in the Urban South

HIST 521 • Fall 2018

Instructor

Alexander X. Byrd
E-mail: <axb@rice.edu>
Office: Humanities 323
Office Phone: (713) 348-254
Physical Office Hours: Th 1:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. and by appointment.
Office Hours via Remind: M-S, 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Meetings

Except for university holidays and other occasions either noted on the syllabus or announced in class, the course meets Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:50 p.m.

Course Description & Objectives

This seminar focuses on issues relating to race, education, and society in the urban south, particularly since the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown* v. *Board*. The class is organized around six broad themes focusing on questions and issues related to 1) African American education before the *Brown* ruling, 2) the *Brown* cases themselves, 3) exigencies of postwar American urban life and their consequences for public school education, 4) the process and impact of court-ordered school desegregation, and 5) the regimes characterizing society and school reform in the urbanized American south since the demise of *Brown*-style, court-enforced desegregation.

By the end of the semester, students will be able to 1) demonstrate a firm understanding of the origins of African American public school education in the post civil war United States and the concomitant origins of school desegregation, 2) relate and critique what black and white contemporaries saw as the desirable aspects of segregation, and present as well the social origins of rising twentieth-century discontent with the same, 3) rehearse the road to *Brown* and speak to its most important waypoints, 4) apprehend how the changing nature of the post war American city structured the possibilities of desegregation, and 5) critique the traditions of public schooling and school reform that have come to the fore since the demise of integration as a civic ideal.

As a history seminar, the course is also explicitly concerned with helping participants to exercise key practices of the historical profession, especially those related to argumentation and research. Consequently throughout the semester we will use our subject matter as a base for critiquing, exploring, and mastering selected conventions, assumptions, and/or traditions of the profession. Seminar participants will do ample work with primary source material, vigorously practice their writing skills, and contribute to the creation of a civil but relentlessly probing community of discussion and inquiry.

Assessment & Assignments

Final course grades will be determined as follows: 30% depends on timely completion of and performance on a series of short papers; 20% depends on overall contribution to seminar discussion and performance on two in-class preparations; 30% depends on timely completion of

and performance on a seminar research project; and 20% depends on the creation of an annotated companion bibliography of 10-20 items further exploring issues raised in at least three of the semester's readings.

Members of the seminar will write seven short papers of 1,500–2,000 words relating to the week's reading. The entire seminar is required to submit papers on Aug. 28 and Sept. 4. Subsequently, you may choose the additional meeting dates on which you will turn in a short paper. These essays should briefly summarize the scope and content of the week's reading, while attending in greater detail to a point in the assignment about which you are especially concerned.

The following policy applies to the short essays to some other written work in the seminar: Work submitted up to two days late will be accepted, but will be graded without comment. Work submitted more than two days late will be accepted, but with the additional penalty of being given a failing grade of 50%

The late policy described above does not apply to any extra credit work, nor does it apply to class presentations, nor does it apply to the final project. Extra credit work submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. The final project must also be submitted by the deadline.

Students may submit up to two review essays beyond the five required (and may choose to have the grade on any of these additional essays replace the grade earned on an already submitted required paper).

Members of the seminar are required to lead at least one discussion over the course of the semester. This obligation consists of preparing an oral presentation during which the presenter will frame the day's discussion by 1) laying out the themes explicit in the week's reading, and by 2) enumerating the problems for discussion emergent in the author's treatment of those themes. Initially, the discussant will direct her questions and comments to the member of the seminar appointed to serve as the day's respondent. Initially, the respondent will have first go at each question raised by the discussant before yielding to the seminar as a whole (The respondent's responsibility is to address the questions raised by the discussant and to address them in such a way as to help facilitate the subsequent conversation). Over the course of the semester, each member of the seminar will serve as a discussant and as a respondent.

The seminar project consists of creating a documentary research project of twenty pages explicating and analyzing how an issue or major question pertinent to the seminar has played out from the perspective of an educator or educational institution in the Houston area. Further details on the scope and requirements of the research project are forthcoming (and will be posted on Canvas).

One last word on assignments: Students who do not complete and submit all of the course assignments will receive a failing grade in the course.

Rusk Settlement House and School. Houston, Texas. Early twentieth century. Is there a problem being solved here? Are there problems being promulgated too?

Books & Readings

The following books form the course's core reading:

Breeden, Edwin C. "Educational Politics and the Making of School Desegregation Policy in Houston, Texas." Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 2017.

Carr, Sarah. *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children*. Bloomsbury Press, 2014.

Connolly, N. D. B. *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida*. University Of Chicago Press, 2016.

Cottrol, Robert J., Raymond T. Diamond, and Leland B. Ware. *Brown V. Board of Education: Caste, Culture, and the Constitution*. University Press of Kansas, 2003.

Erickson, Ansley T. *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and Its Limits*. University Of Chicago Press, 2016.

Fairclough, Adam. *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South*. Belknap Press, 2007.

García, David G. *Strategies of Segregation: Race, Residence, and the Struggle for Educational Equality (American Crossroads)*. University of California Press, 2018.

Khan, Shamus. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School (the William G. Bowen Memorial Series in Higher Education)*. Princeton University Press, 2012.

Payne, Charles M. *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools*. Harvard Education Press, 2008.

Ponton, David, III. "Criminalizing Space: Ideological and Institutional Productions of Race, Gender, and State-Sanctioned Violence in Houston, 1948-1967." Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 2017.

Straus, Emily E. *Death of a Suburban Dream: Race and Schools in Compton, California (Politics and Culture in Modern America)*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Rooks, Noliwe. *Cutting School: Privatization, Segregation, and the End of Public Education*. The New Press, 2017.

Attendance & Communication

As this is a history course built largely around close reading and intense discussion, your perfect attendance is critically important to all of us in our striving to meet the stated course objectives and to each of us meeting our own personal objectives for the course. If you are not here, you cannot easily receive and process the insights of your colleagues, nor can you contribute to the building of the kind of intellectual community—through discussion, questioning, and debate—that is vital to the work of a history seminar. The following attendance policy is in place for this course: Students enrolled in the course may miss up to one class with no penalty and with no questions asked. Students who miss additional days of class will be penalized 1/3 of a grade point on their final grade for each additional day missed.

Assignment details and returned work will be uploaded to Canvas. So it is important for you to check that site frequently. Brief communications concerning the course (reminders, change of venue, et cetera) will be sent via Remind (which you can set to receive class messages via your preferred email address, via text message, or through the mobile Remind app). You can find the Remind instructions by following this link.

Additional Critical Information

Disability Resource Center

Students with a documented disability and in need of academic or other adjustments should speak with me during the first two weeks of class (all communication will remain confidential). Students with disabilities should also contact the Disability Resource Center in Allen Center room 111 (phone 737-5841, e-mail adarice@rice.edu).

Rice University Honor Code

I expect that members of the course will re-familiarize themselves with the responsibilities and privileges of the university's honor system. I expect that members of the course will assiduously follow the dictates of the honor system. I expect that members of the course will raise with me any questions concerning how the system applies to their work in the class. The pledge is required on all written work submitted in the course.

Wellness

Take care of yourself. As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. Mental health services are available on campus, and treatment does work: <https://wellbeing.rice.edu/counseling-center/contact-us>.

Calendar

Aug. 21	**Course Introduction: Our Problem**
Aug. 28 NB: I am actually out of town on this day. So we will decide on another evening to meet during the same week. I hope that we decide brunch!	**A Way Forward?** Carr, *Hope Against Hope* (2014) Discussant: Dr. Byrd | Respondent: The Class
Sept. 4	Khan, *Privilege* (2012)
Sept. 11	**A Backward Glance** Fairclough, *A Class of their Own*, prologue–ch. 7. Discussant: | Respondent:
Sept. 18	**Brown Itself** Cottrol, et. al., *Brown v. Board* (2003) Discussant: | Respondent: Fairclough, *A Class of their Own*, chs. 7–10 Discussant: | Respondent:
Sept. 25	**Urban Contexts: Race and Society in Two Postwar Cities** Connolly, *A World More Concrete* (2014) Discussant: | Respondent:
Oct. 2	Straus, *Death of a Suburban Dream* (2014) Discussant: | Respondent: *200 Words (due on Canvas) and Five Minutes on Project Prospects*
Oct. 16	***Brown* Era Houston and Brown in Houston** Ponton, "Criminalizing Space" (2017) Discussant: | Respondent:
Oct. 23	Breeden, "Educational Politics" (2017) Discussant: | Respondent:
Oct. 30	**Beyond Brown** Garcia, *Strategies of Segregation* (2018) Discussant: | Respondent: Project First Paragraph Due In Class and on Canvas
Nov. 6	Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis* (2016) Discussant: | Respondent:

Nov. 13	Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change* (2008) Discussant: | Respondent:
Nov. 20	Rooks, *Cutting School* (2018) Discussant: | Respondent:
Nov. 27	Workshopping Projects *Annotated Bibliography due via Canvas*
Nov. 30	*Seminar Project due at 5:00 pm Dec. 1 via Canvas*

The course syllabus is subject to change with reasonable advance notice. Revisions, if any, will be announced to the class and posted to Canvas.

Staff at the School Without Walls at Francis-Stevens. Washington, DC. February 2018. A school where black lives mattered? What would that school look like?